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Patent
Attorney's Docket No. 019519-267

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of) BOX: AF
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Nobuyuki KITA et al.) Group Art Unit: 1752
)
Application No.: 09/662,548) Examiner: B. Gilliam
)
Filed: September 15, 2000) Confirmation No.: 1924
)
For: HEAT-SENSITIVE LITHOGRAPHIC)
PRINTING PLATE PRECURSOR)

12/11/03

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REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Advisory Action dated April 14, 2003, applicants hereby request reconsideration in light of the following remarks.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner questioned why a different printer was used in the Examples provided in the Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. §1.132 provided with the response filed on March 27, 2003, and the printing results set forth in the Declaration. Addressing these points in order, applicants first note that the press life in the present invention is influenced by a different phenomenon than in conventional plates. In particular, press life in conventional plates is determined by an inking defect attributable to abrasion of the image area. In contrast, the press life in the printing plate prepared from the precursor of the present invention is caused by the deterioration of the hydrophilicity of the hydrophilic layer in the non-image areas as printing progresses. Such deterioration depends on the hydrophilicity of the hydrophilic layer in the printing plate precursor.

When the hydrophilicity is low, the hydrophilic level at which stains are present occurs more rapidly. Thus, when the printing plate has an overcoat layer for protecting the hydrophilicity of the hydrophilic layer, as in Example 6 of the Declaration, the hydrophilicity of the hydrophilic layer is maintained at a higher level during printing and press life can be maintained. In contrast, when the overcoat layer is absent, as in Example 1 of the Declaration, the enhancement of press life due to the overcoat layer is absent. Such results are a function of the plate and not the printing machine. Therefore, a comparison of Examples 1 and 6 is believed to be the most effective way of demonstrating the importance of the overcoat layer since the only difference between the two Examples is the overcoat layer itself.

From the foregoing discussion, it will further be apparent that Gardner, Jr. et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,939,237, is totally different since it principally describes an arrangement wherein a hydrophobic photohardening layer (see the passage beginning at column 4, line 36) is coated with an overcoat layer that can be removed on the press by the action of the fountain solution and/or ink. The hydrophobic photohardening layer covers a hydrophilic photohardening layer. Therefore, Gardner, Jr. et al. certainly does not teach the importance of the claimed overcoat layer in the context of the present invention.

With respect to the Examiner's comments regarding the results set forth in the specification, applicants note that in Examples 1 and 6 of the specification, 10,000 sheets were printed, but press life was not estimated. In the Declaration, the effect of the overcoat layer is shown with regard to the press life of the plates due to a phenomenon, as explained above, which is different from conventional plates. Therefore, the Declaration

demonstrates the importance of the overcoat layer in the present invention, as it effects press life, a result which is not suggested by the prior art, particularly Gardner, Jr. et al.

Based on a clearer understanding of the present invention, applicants respectfully submit that the claims of record are patentable over the cited prior art, particularly in view of the technical evidence which has been presented.¹ Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are requested.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, she is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 27, 2003

¹ It is not clear from the file of the undersigned attorney whether the illustration mentioned in the remarks of the previous response was provided so a copy of the illustration is being provided herewith in the interest of completeness.